trap, and bought it. I heard him grumbling behind me. Canadians were crazy.

*

Adam tired himself out last fall by helping his brother move. He also more trouble than ever sleeping that night, because of the pain. Carting stuff up and down stairs was especially hard on his bad knees. I asked him why he didn't just say no. He said he couldn't say no to his brother. I believe his brother was capable of saying no to him. A little later I told Adam they must be close, but he said they weren't. Why put himself out, then? I'm convinced that he had no one.

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We were standing on the steps. Adam was smoking. I was saying something about the stress that went with our work. I said I coped with it by turning into someone else. I said I guessed that sounded pretty bad. Adam said it sure did. The cell-phone rang. I saw that it was from his wife, and handed him the phone. He left me alone on the porch for a few moments to talk to her privately in the office. When he got back I could see how tired he was. I guessed it had been a hard day. His cigarette was nearly exhausted too, and beginning to burn the railing. We resumed our conversation but without the same enthusiasm.